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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to help agencies serving older adults with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities in setting up a relatively inexpensive creative art program. The first section presents a rationale for creative art experiences for this population and then provides specific information on program development, including setting up the group, appropriate materials, promoting successful art experiences, the role of the group leader, responding to the art work, motivation, and accommodating various disabilities. Fifteen activity plans are included. Each one lists the materials needed, necessary preparation for the activity, instructions for participants, and suggestions for the group leader. The activity plans include exploring clay, painting to music, stimulus images including a head and shoulders or a vase/container, house cut-outs, stamp pad printing, paper and fabric collage, sponge printing, fish collage, cardboard construction, stencil painting, mural with cut-out images, masks, group collage, and body tracing. Appended are lists of art materials and additional resources. (DB)

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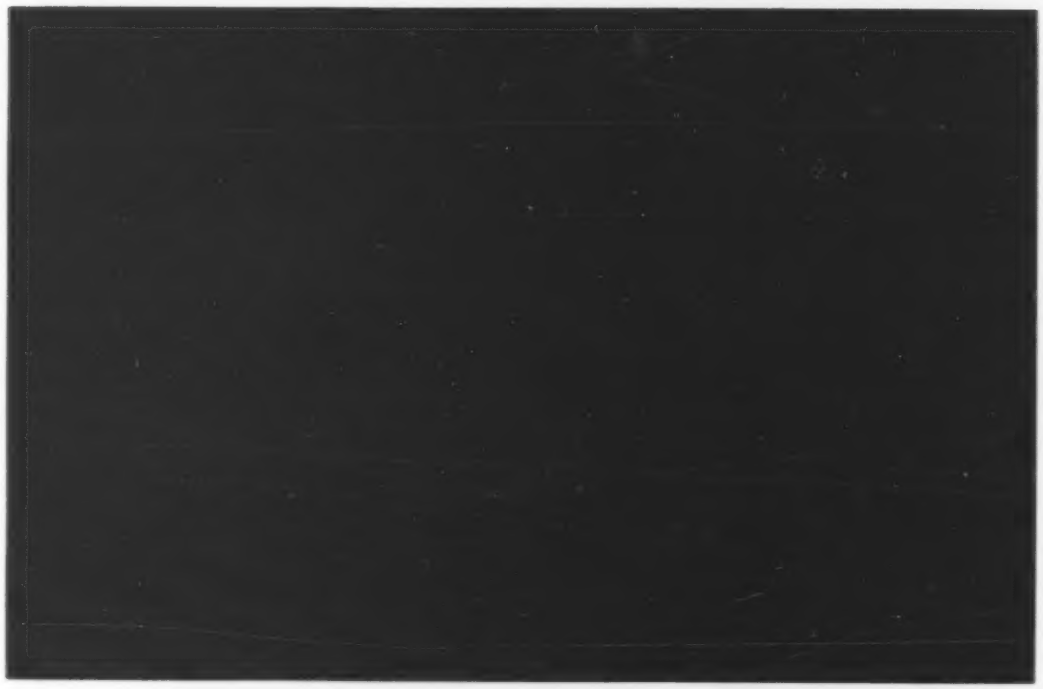
A GUIDE TO SETTING UP A CREATIVE ART EXPERIENCES PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



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– A University Affiliated Program –

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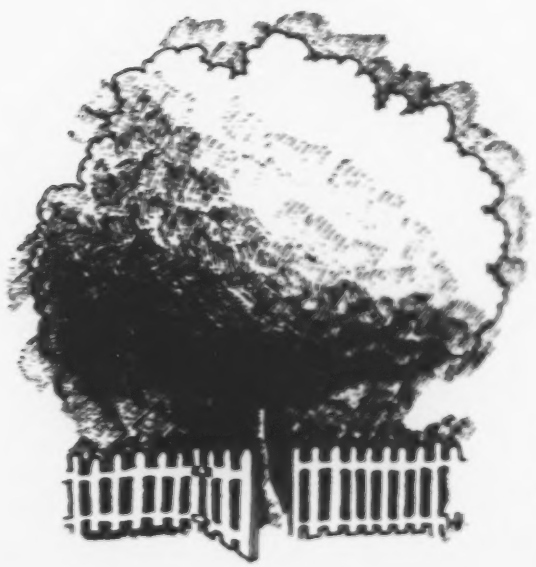

Program on Aging and Developmental Disabilities
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Drawing by Joan Moroney

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INTRODUCTION

Why art experiences? As individuals, we all have the right to fully explore our capabilities, to pursue a vision and to express our unique identities. In our society, older persons frequently use retirement as a time for personal, creative pursuits. Yet this opportunity is typically denied to persons with developmental disabilities, who may have spent much of their lives devoted to vocational training and work activities. Although many are likely to have been exposed to craft activities, far fewer have had the chance to express themselves through painting, drawing and sculpture.

When persons with developmental disabilities are given access to quality art experiences it becomes evident that impressive creative achievement can coexist with significant mental and physical challenges.

When persons with developmental disabilities are given access to quality art experiences it becomes evident that impressive creative achievement can coexist with significant mental and physical challenges. In spite of these challenges, many individuals bring to their art work delightful qualities and strengths which are the envy of quite a few professional, traditionally trained artists.

Purpose of the guide. This guide is designed for the staff of agencies who seek to address the particular needs of older adults with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. Service providers who wish to offer their older clients an opportunity to enhance self-esteem, strengthen independent functioning, and communicate emotional concerns will find the "how to's" needed to set up a relatively inexpensive creative art program.

Content of the guide. After a discussion of the rationale for creative art experiences, specific information needed to set up and maintain an art program will follow. Techniques of effective group leadership, motivation of participants, accommodation of disabilities, and response to the art work will be covered. **At the conclusion of the guide, 15 activity plans are provided to aid the individual who plans the art experience groups.** Lists of suggested art materials and sources of additional information are appended.

Needs of persons who are aging. Older adults with developmental disabilities face some of the same challenges as other elderly people. They may experience changes in health, reduced stamina, hearing or vision losses, and chronic medical conditions such as arthritis or hypertension. They must adapt to changes in appearance that accompany the aging process, such as graying of the hair, wrinkling of the skin, etc. Persons with developmental disabilities may find these physical changes and health problems somewhat hard to understand.

In addition, they experience the emotional losses of later life, including the deaths of aging parents, siblings or friends, and the departure of roommates or beloved staff members. Losses may occur through transitions as well, when seniors discontinue vocational activities or experience disruptive residential transfers.

Although the impact of these events can be lessened by sensitive planning and careful attention to the needs of aging individuals, some loss in later life is inevitable. Promoting the individual's self-expression with art materials provides a coping mechanism in that some of the

accompanying emotions can be externalized. Communication of feelings through art work may be perceived as "safer" than talking, and is one of a very few expressive channels open to those who lack verbal abilities.

When experiencing a loss, we all need to go through a process of bereavement in order to prevent more serious mental health problems. Creative art experiences may be a particularly effective part of the grieving process for persons with mental retardation (Harlan & Hawkins, in press), whose need to actively cope with loss is just beginning to be recognized (Wadsworth & Harper, 1991).

THE CREATIVE ART APPROACH

The art experiences described in this guide are designed to promote the creative self-expression of the individual within a group setting. The approach is based upon the assumption that everyone has the potential to use art materials and to be creative, regardless of training, experience, or "talent". Open-ended activities allow the participant to determine the outcome of the art experience to as great an extent as possible. Based upon some of the principles of art-as-therapy (Kramer, 1971; Rubin, 1984), these art experiences offer participants an opportunity for communication, enhancement of self-esteem and strengthening of the individual's ability to make his or her own decisions.

Difference from an art class. As the primary goal is self-expression, the art experiences discussed here differ from those which might occur in an art class, for example. The goals of art education usually focus upon the attainment of knowledge, skills and techniques. The art work which is made is judged by certain external standards. In contrast, the approach discussed here stresses the importance of the **process** of art-making as equal to or greater than that of the final product. The work is not judged. Although information about the technical aspects of art materials may be provided by the art group leader when needed to further the self-expression of the individual, this is not an end in itself.

Difference from craft activities. These creative art experiences also differ from craft projects in several respects. Successfully crafted objects, for example a woven scarf or a ceramic coffee mug, require the completion of a series of specific steps. The end result is often intended to be a useful, functional item. In art activities, there is no one right or wrong way to proceed. Experimentation and imagination are more important than technique. The end result may be unpredictable and not particularly useful. An additional difference between art and crafts is that communication of feelings and thoughts is more readily accomplished by making a painting or clay sculpture than by basket-making, for example.

In art activities, there is no one right or wrong way to proceed. Experimentation and imagination are more important than technique.

Summary

- EVERYONE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO USE ART MATERIALS AND TO BE CREATIVE, REGARDLESS OF TRAINING, EXPERIENCE OR "TALENT".

- THE APPROACH EMPHASIZES OPEN-ENDED ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SELF-EXPRESSION.
- DIFFERING FROM THE GOALS OF AN ART CLASS OR OF CRAFT PROJECTS, THE ART EXPERIENCES ARE INTENDED TO FOSTER COMMUNICATION AND A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT, AS WELL AS TO ENHANCE INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING.

BENEFITS of CREATIVE ART EXPERIENCES

When undertaken in a positive, supportive atmosphere, art activities can be pleasurable and fun. There are additional benefits achieved through art making which go beyond these recreational advantages. Gains may be experienced in the following areas:

Communication. When we draw or sculpt, we share our feelings and ideas with others. As the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words"; a picture is an effective way to communicate things we are unable or unwilling to express verbally. The communication value of art work may be even more important for persons with intellectual and physical challenges who have difficulty speaking.

Cognitive stimulation and manual skills. The task of making art, no matter at what level of development, engages many of our mental capacities. We use our perception, our memory, our ability to organize, and our judgment. Eye-hand coordination and manual skills, such as fine motor dexterity, are also employed.

A painting or sculpture, like our handwriting, is an extension of ourselves and is unique.

Self-esteem. A painting or a sculpture, like our handwriting, is an extension of ourselves and is unique. When we feel good about what we have made, we feel good about ourselves. The work can be seen, touched, and retained for future reference. It can be shared and displayed, which may lead to expressions of interest or admiration from other persons.

Sense of autonomy. From picking up a brush to choosing a color to making a mark on the page, every step in the art making process involves decisions. Practice in making choices and expressing preferences strengthens the ability of the individual to function independently. Persons who experience limited opportunities for exerting control over their lives may especially appreciate an activity in which they can achieve a sense of mastery.

Social interaction. Socializing may occur spontaneously as individuals work together at a table, or it may be structured into an activity such as mural-making. Social interaction can also occur nonverbally as participants share imagery or draw each other's portraits.

Summary

- PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE ART EXPERIENCES CAN ENHANCE THE EMOTIONAL, MENTAL AND

Drawing by Thelma Bocock

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PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

- IT MAY POSITIVELY AFFECT SELF-CONCEPT, THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE FEELINGS AND TO MAKE DECISIONS.
- COGNITIVE ABILITIES ARE EXERCISED AND THE GROUP SETTING PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE INTERACTION WITH OTHERS.

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES and the ART WORK of PERSONS with MENTAL RETARDATION

All persons pass through various developmental stages as part of their cognitive maturation. These stages are reflected, to an extent, in any art work which a person makes. Because the experience of making art and the individual's perception of the art product may differ according to the individual's cognitive level, it may be helpful to understand a little about the stages of artistic development.

An adult whose mental growth has been limited by developmental disability may work in a stage of artistic development which in some aspects is similar to that of a child.

However, it must be emphasized that creative artistic achievement is not dependent upon achievement on intelligence tests. And in the case of older adults, the individual brings to his or her art work the experience, knowledge and skills which have been acquired over a lifetime.

It is also important to keep in mind that, as in the general population, persons with mental retardation may have special abilities in some areas which surpass those in other areas. They may or may not move into another developmental stage at some point in the future. Therefore, the following brief summary of the developmental stages using art materials (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982) is intended to suggest broad guidelines. An individual's potential should never be limited by a diagnostic category or label of any kind.

1. *Scribble stage*

Scribbling is sometimes viewed negatively, as an insignificant or wasteful activity. In fact, it is a necessary and important beginning in artistic exploration. (The need to scribble is such that children will do it on any available surface!) At first, such drawings consist of random marks, then circles, lines, loops and swirls emerge which are increasingly deliberate and organized. There is no attempt to make a particular image, although the child may begin to give names to drawings after the fact.

When using paint, as well as in drawing, the motor activity and tactile sensations are of primary importance. There is pleasure in trying a range of colors, color which is used for its own sake rather than in an attempt to be realistic. Clay is beaten and pounded, then at a later stage formed into coils and balls, but these activities are not undertaken for the purpose of making something in particular. The individual's engagement in art at this stage is in the exploratory process and the accompanying sensory experiences. The final product may not be of great interest to that individual.

2. *Preschematic stage*

   Marks are now more consciously controlled. Partially recognizable imagery begins to emerge which relates to the world around the child. Head-feet symbols are familiar hallmarks of this stage. Objects appear to float on the page and parts of images are commonly omitted, distorted, or not in realistic proportion. It is not appropriate to correct such distortions or omissions because they reflect the individual's level of maturation and his or her particular view of the world. For example, a child might draw herself as the biggest figure in a picture of her family because she sees herself as being the most important, the center of her life. She knows her father and mother are larger than she; she is drawing her own experience rather than "reality."

   At this stage, finished art work is often presented to a parent, teacher, or other beloved adult as a gift.

3. *Schematic stage*

   A definite concept of people and the environment has now been acquired. Once the child has discovered how to make them, the same form concepts, or schema are repeated over and over. For example, a tree may always be drawn with a stick-like trunk and circle on top to represent branches and foliage regardless of the context of the picture. Objects are arranged in a straight line across the page, using the bottom edge of the paper as a baseline. Similarly, a strip at the top of the page represents the sky.

When the art group leader has some knowledge of developmental stages as reflected in art, he or she can better understand that scribbling or pounding clay are meaningful explorations of the art process for some individuals.

Implications. When the art group leader has some knowledge of developmental stages as reflected in art, he or she can better understand that scribbling or pounding clay are meaningful explorations of the art process for some individuals. The group leader will realize that for participants who do not work in a representational manner (who work abstractly), the question, "What is it?" doesn't make sense. Likewise, unrealistic looking images are not defective, nor do they reflect lack of skill. Instead, the art shows the way the individual sees the world at his or her stage of development.

Summary

- AN INDIVIDUAL'S POTENTIAL SHOULD NEVER BE LIMITED BY A DIAGNOSTIC CATEGORY OR LABEL.
- UNDERSTANDING ART IN A DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT WILL BETTER ENABLE THE LEADER TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY AND APPROPRIATELY TO THE PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS OR SCULPTURE MADE BY GROUP PARTICIPANTS.

- AT EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS, THE ART EXPERIENCE IS PRIMARILY A SENSORY-MOTOR ONE. THERE IS NO INTEREST IN MAKING AN IMAGE OF SOMETHING IN PARTICULAR.
- WHEN REPRESENTATION APPEARS AT A LATER STAGE, IMAGES MAY APPEAR TO BE DISTORTED OR INCOMPLETE. THESE ARE NOT MISTAKES, BUT RATHER REFLECT THE WAY INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT AT A PARTICULAR LEVEL OF MATURATION.

SETTING UP THE GROUP

Consultation. If the agency sponsoring the art group does not have on staff an individual with training and experience in therapeutic art activities, it is important to involve such an individual on a consultant basis for at least a temporary period. He or she can advise the agency in its process of setting up the art program and can provide training to staff persons who serve as group leaders. For possible sources of consultant help, please refer to Appendix B: Additional Resources.

Group leadership. The most suitable group leader is trained and experienced in the area of therapeutic art activities. In the absence of a person with these qualifications, the group leader may be a staff person or volunteer who is flexible, enthusiastic, and open to learning. Personal experience working with art materials is very helpful.

An effective art group leader respects the group members as capable individuals.

It is necessary that the leader be able to facilitate the creativity of others without imposing his or her own preferences. An effective art group leader respects the group members as capable individuals, rather than perceiving them primarily, for example, as "mentally retarded." An interest in--and appreciation of--the art work which is made by the participants is essential.

It is usually a good idea to have a second person, or assistant, to work with the group leader, especially if there are individuals in the group who need a lot of one-on-one attention. The group leader(s) should allocate several hours each week in addition to the actual group meeting time in order to accommodate other necessary tasks. Those tasks include planning activities, gathering materials, setting up and cleaning up, maintaining supplies, and keeping records.

Orientation and training. If there are administrators and direct-care staff in the agency who will not be directly involved with the art program, it is a good idea to orient them to the purpose and goals of the program, to the type of activities which will take place, and to give suggestions about their interactions with the group participants concerning the art products. The reason for this preparation is to prevent misunderstanding and to gain agency-wide support of the program. An orientation session may reduce interruptions of the art group meetings and inappropriate comments about the art work, for example.

Drawing by Elmo Spearman

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If the group leaders do not have qualifications in the area of therapeutic art activities, they should have some initial training by an outside consultant.

Who can participate? Participation in the art group should be voluntary. When discussing the opportunity with potential group members, emphasize that neither previous experience working with art materials nor "talent" is necessary. Physical disabilities need not prevent anyone from participating in some way.

The only individuals not suitable for art group membership would be those whose behavior is very disruptive. However, it may be wise to go ahead and include some individuals on a trial basis, as many challenging behaviors may be reduced in a therapeutic art setting (O'Malley, 1983).

Ordering materials. Allow at least three or four weeks in advance of the first art group session for selecting and purchasing art supplies, especially when using mail order sources. (See "Appropriate Materials", Appendix A: Art Materials List, and Appendix B: Additional Resources.)

Location of the art sessions. Art activities need an environment which can tolerate some messiness (a floor which can be mopped rather than deep pile carpet, for example). A sink is needed to supply water and for clean up of painting and clay work. Tables should be good-sized to accommodate large sized paper and provide "elbow room", while allowing enough persons to be seated to give a sense of belonging to the group.

Elderly persons work best in a very well lit room where glare has been reduced. Room to store art materials and work in progress will be necessary, as well as wall space to exhibit finished art work. Distractions can be prevented by restricting use of the room during the meeting time to the art group only.

Frequency and length of art sessions. Circumstances particular to the agency, such as available staff time, participant interest, etc., will best determine how often and how long the art sessions will be held. The experience will be most effective if groups meet regularly (at least once a week) at a consistent time. A minimum of an hour should be allocated in order to allow engagement in a creative project.

Many persons will be able to work for longer periods or may wish to carry over work from one session to another. However, when first participating in art activities, some individuals can only stay in the group for ten minutes or less. Keep in mind that it is very common to see an increase in attention span after some experience with the activity (Harlan & Rominger, 1991).

Summary

- A CONSULTANT CAN ASSIST SETTING UP THE ART PROGRAM BY PROVIDING ADVICE AND TRAINING.
- THE GROUP LEADER SHOULD BE SOMEONE WHO IS ABLE TO FACILITATE THE CREATIVITY OF OTHERS WITHOUT IMPOSING HIS OR HER PREFERENCES.
- PARTICIPATION IN AN ART GROUP NEED NOT BE LIMITED BY DISABILITIES OR LACK OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE USING ART MATERIALS.

- A SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE ART GROUP IS FREE OF DISTRACTIONS, HAS ADEQUATE WORK SPACE, LIGHT, AND STORAGE, AS WELL AS RUNNING WATER AND WASHABLE SURFACES.
- AT LEAST AN HOUR SHOULD BE SET ASIDE FOR THE ART SESSION, WITH FLEXIBILITY TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE WHOSE INITIAL ATTENTION SPAN IS SHORT.

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

The best kinds of materials are those which are **simple, unstructured,** and **sturdy.** Simple materials can be used effectively within an hour-long session, with very little or no instruction. They can communicate what the individual wants to express quickly and directly. Tempera paint, colored pencils and water-based markers, for example, are easily utilized without much explanation from the group leader, for example, and can effectively convey ideas and feelings.

Unstructured media allow the participant to express his or her personal vision without externally imposed limitations. Structured materials include needlework kits, plaster or clay molds, coloring books, etc. In contrast, unstructured materials include yarn, plaster, clay, blank paper, etc.

A useful selection of art materials will allow for a range of expressive possibilities and accommodate personal preferences for various degrees of neatness and control.

It is important that the art supplies cannot easily be broken or damaged. This means that paper is of good quality in order to prevent holes being made during erasure, brushes are sturdy, and chalk pastels are of the hard, rather than soft, variety. Materials which are carefully stored and well-maintained will remain attractive and easy to use.

Avoid conflicts which arise when art materials must be shared by providing separate boxes of drawing materials and containers of paint for each person.

A useful selection of art materials will allow for a range of expressive possibilities and accommodate personal preferences for various degrees of neatness and control. For example some persons prefer very clean and precise media such as colored pencils, while many others enjoy the fluidity and tactile qualities of more "messy" materials such as paint and clay. Vary activities to feature both two and three dimensional media.

Special considerations should be kept in mind in selecting art supplies for older persons with developmental disabilities. Because of the possibility of ingesting materials, all media must be **nontoxic.** The needs of individuals with physical challenges will also determine what kinds of materials are best purchased (see "Working with Disabilities").

Age-appropriateness is another issue in choosing materials for older adults with mental retardation. They may have been consistently treated as younger than their chronological ages, leading to inadequate awareness of the aging process. Any replacement of habitually used materials or activities, however, should be done gradually and with sensitivity. It is easy to avoid the wax crayons traditionally associated with children when oil pastels are widely accessible and relatively inexpensive. They have greater brilliancy, can be blended together, and require less pressure to make a mark. Clay or non-hardening modeling clay can be substituted for play dough. Older persons who use coloring books may be willing to put them aside if exciting activities tailored to their needs are available.

Summary

- MATERIALS WHICH WORK WELL CAN COMMUNICATE QUICKLY AND NEED NO INSTRUCTION FROM THE GROUP LEADER.
- THEY SHOULD BE AGE-APPROPRIATE, STURDY AND OF SUFFICIENT QUANTITY TO PREVENT THE NECESSITY OF SHARING.
- AN ADEQUATE SELECTION OF MATERIALS ACCOMMODATES VARIOUS LEVELS OF TOLERANCE FOR "MESSINESS" AND PROMOTES CHOICE-MAKING.
- THE MOST ESSENTIAL MATERIALS ARE OIL PASTELS, TEMPERA PAINT, CLAY, AND MARKERS.

PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL ART EXPERIENCES

Structuring the group. At the first group meeting explain the purpose of the group, when and for how long it will meet, who will be the group leader(s), and what kinds of activities will take place. Tell the participants that this will be an opportunity for them to make things they would like to make, and that no one's work will be judged. Introduce some of the art materials which will be used. Instill a sense of group by having the participants sitting together at one table, if possible, and by taking a few minutes at the end of every session to have each person share his or her art work with the others.

Instill a sense of group by having the participants sitting together at one table, if possible, and by taking a few minutes at the end of every session to have each person share his or her art work with the others.

Creating a secure atmosphere. Participants may be concerned, especially at the beginning, about making mistakes. Offering assurance that there is no right or wrong way to make art and that everyone's work will be valued, will help allay these kinds of worries. Similarly, the participant will be more comfortable and better able to do art work if it is clear that he or she is in control of the process. That means being free to stop working or to leave the group temporarily, if necessary.

While creativity flourishes best in an environment of freedom of choice, it cannot coexist with fear or prolonged distractions.

Some basic ground rules might be: (1) No aggression or verbal abuse and (2) no behavior which interferes with the other participants' ability to do their art work.

Stimulating creativity. Many elements can contribute to rich and varied art work. Hanging the work of group participants on the wall of the activity room provides inspiration, as well as instills pride. Reproductions of different kinds of work of famous artists can be helpful to give participants ideas for subject matter and new approaches. Choose abstract examples or work with simple, bold forms. Stimulating the senses, as part of an art activity, through music and other recorded sounds, fresh flowers, or items from nature which can be touched (seashells and sand, for example) will also have a positive impact on the art work. A well-planned field trip can be an excellent prelude to an art project.

Choice. Some choice of materials should always be available, even to individuals who appear to have difficulty making choices. Such persons may be overwhelmed by too many options, but with practice may learn to decide among limited options. Apparently minor decisions, such as the size of paper, or whether to turn it horizontally or vertically, are still very significant to participants.

To promote the creative process, choice needs to be incorporated into the structure of the activity. **Open-ended activities** allow the participant to determine to a large degree what the outcome of the art product will be. Ideas and suggestions are presented, but only for the purpose of sparking the individual's own initiative. The activity plans presented in this guide (see Part Two) are designed to be open-ended and allow for a maximum of decision-making opportunities. For example, "Painting to Music" uses recorded music to stimulate involvement, but the participant determines the content of the paintings.

Assessment. Informal assessment of the skills, interests and concerns of each participant is an important aspect of successful art experiences. The purpose of the assessment is to learn about the participant's abilities and limitations, preferred media and types of activities, as well as emotional concerns. This information will help the group leader plan appropriate activities, neither too difficult nor insufficiently challenging, and learn how best to motivate and support each individual.

Although it is especially useful at the beginning of the art program, some level of assessment should continue on an ongoing basis. Take time out during the activity to observe the individual's behavior, his or her art-making process, and any accompanying verbal expression. Periodically, look more closely at the art works which have been completed, in chronological order. Changes which have occurred over time will then become evident. Written notes on each activity session will help the group leader remember important aspects and observe more carefully. Here are some questions to guide your observations:

1. How long did the participant work and how many art works were undertaken?
2. What kind of materials were used? Did the participant identify the subject matter or title?
3. What did the participant talk about, if anything?
4. How did the individual behave? Did particular behaviors increase, decrease or remain the same throughout the session?

5. Were there any special conditions affecting the individual's participation today (for example, recent contact with family, concern about upcoming hospitalization, etc.)?
6. What type of interventions were made by the group leader?

The finished art work. The participant should make the decision as to when the work is completed. He or she can then be encouraged to sign the work (even if an actual signature is not possible). The group leader should make sure there is a name and date on all art work. The participant may wish to have a picture hung or sculpture displayed in a public area or in his or her bedroom. Or he or she may wish to give it as a gift.

It is recommended that **portfolios** be made by each group member (with assistance if necessary) in which completed drawings and paintings or work in progress can be safely stored. A portfolio can be constructed by putting together two sheets of poster board with wide masking tape on three sides, leaving the top open. Make sure work is stored in an area where it will not be stolen or damaged. All art work should be treated with the care and respect owed to the person who made it.

Summary

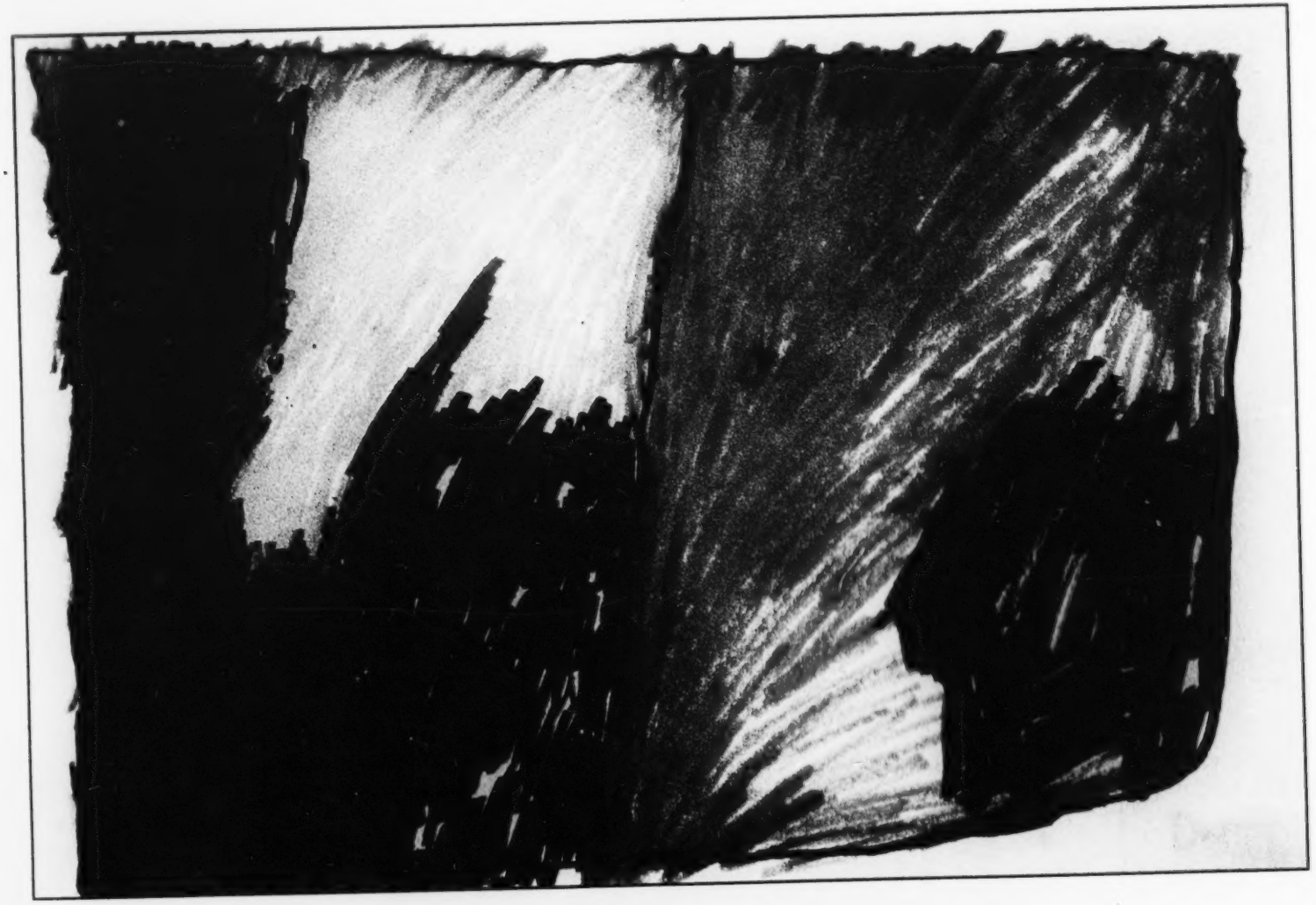
- AN INDIVIDUAL MUST FEEL SECURE AND IN CONTROL OF THE PROCESS IN ORDER TO FULLY PARTICIPATE.
- PROVIDE STIMULATING EXPERIENCES TO SET THE STAGE FOR THE ART ACTIVITY.
- OPEN-ENDED ACTIVITIES LEAVE ROOM FOR CREATIVITY AND INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE.
- CAREFUL ASSESSMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S USE OF THE ART EXPERIENCE HELPS THE GROUP LEADER RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY.
- TREAT FINISHED ART WORK WITH CARE.

ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER

Probably the best way to describe the function of the group leader is as a **facilitator.** The group leader sets the stage for creative activity and ensures that a working atmosphere is preserved. He or she provides stimulation, structure, and supportive assistance. The group leader is an important source of enthusiasm and encouragement.

The group leader is **not** a teacher. Although he or she may occasionally provide information about how to use materials or introduce examples from art history, the function of the group leader is not primarily to impart knowledge and techniques, but rather **to promote self-expression.** Following are some important aspects of the group leader's role.

Probably the best way to describe the function of the group leader is as a facilitator. The group leader sets the stage for creative activity and ensures that a working atmosphere is preserved.



Drawing by Don

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Provide choice. The subject matter and type of materials used should be up to the individual. Although it may be appropriate to offer suggestions and ideas, the individual must have the opportunity to decide for him or herself. Whenever possible, materials should be accessible to the participants themselves as needed, rather than dispensed by a staff member.

Accept all art work. Art work is an extension of the person who makes it, and as such, it should not be judged. The participant should not be criticized if a picture expresses negative emotions such as anger, for example. The group leader should be careful to avoid showing a preference for the work of one individual over another.

There is no right or wrong way to do things in a creative art activity. The individual should be allowed to work at his or her own level of ability and speed.

Provide the appropriate level of assistance. How much support an individual will need is best determined by observation and experience working with that person and with others. However, it is a common temptation to give more help than is necessary. The participant has the right to try, to make mistakes, and to try again. For example, if a participant asks the group leader to draw something for him or her, it would be better to use other approaches first. The leader could help visualize what the image looks like, show pictures or, if necessary, draw something on a scratch sheet of paper.

The right level of assistance is that which is enough to enable the participant to use his or her own initiative and creativity. It may be appropriate to actively assist in some situations where physical disabilities or emotional stresses are present. The goal of such interventions should be to get the person working independently.

Model behavior. Your nonjudgmental acceptance and enthusiasm for all efforts will be a good example for the participants. They may be more likely to appreciate the work of their fellow group members if they have seen your positive acceptance of different styles and levels of ability.

Remember, the art work belongs to the participant. Never draw on a participant's page or work on a sculpture without permission. The finished work belongs to the individual, who may do with it as he or she wishes.

Particularly when first leading a group, many staff persons feel they must be actively involved in working with participants at all times. If the group is engrossed in its activities, it may not be necessary to address comments of encouragement or try to help out. Rather, the leader can spend some time observing what is going on (see paragraph on assessment in "Promoting Successful Art Experiences") Such quiet industriousness is a sign that the leader has succeeded in the primary task of facilitating independent creative work.

Summary

- THE GROUP LEADER PROVIDES STRUCTURE, STIMULATION AND SUPPORT IN ORDER TO PROMOTE SELF-EXPRESSION.
- THE ROLE IS THAT OF FACILITATOR, RATHER THAN TEACHER.
- THE LEADER ENCOURAGES INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING AND

DOES NOT PASS JUDGMENT ON THE ART WORK.

- IF THE LEADER BEGINS TO SPEND LESS TIME HELPING, IT MAY MEAN THE GROUP IS SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGED IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS.

RESPONDING TO THE ART WORK

What you say does make a difference. As a group leader you have a position of authority which will cause the group participants to listen carefully to your comments. Whatever you say (or, sometimes, don't say) will be important to those individuals. A casual remark on your part may easily be interpreted as a judgment on the work. Your job as group leader is to help the participant discover what he or she likes, rather than imposing your own preferences. Therefore, it is important to think about both the positive and negative messages you may be conveying.

Participants may want to share their art with other staff who are not directly involved with the group. Those persons should also be aware of the guidelines discussed here.

Find out what the work means to the person who created it. It is very easy for us to project our own ideas onto someone else's picture. We may see flowers where the artist intended to make people. Or we may see people where the artist was not working in a representational manner at all. Too often a staff member will ask an individual, "What is that?" when the individual has no particular subject in mind, but rather is working abstractly. An open-ended question such as **"Is there anything you would like to tell me about your work?"** gives participants a choice as to whether and how they wish to respond.

Value process over product. In making comments about the work, focus on the experience of creating it rather than on the end result. An observation about the colors which were used, the way the shapes were arranged, or any other choice the individual has made, will reinforce the importance of discovery and experimentation: **"I noticed you started working with oil pastel and now you're using markers. Which works best for you?"** Such comments will demonstrate your respect for the particular decision-making process which the individual has undertaken.

An open-ended question such as "Is there anything you would like to tell me about your work?" gives participants a choice as to whether and how they wish to respond.

Affirm individuality. Point out what makes the work unique: **"Your sky has green mixed in with the blue. John's has pink clouds."** This will help give your participants a sense that there is no one right way to make a picture or sculpture.

Acknowledge rather than praise. Praising the work with comments such as "I like that," or "That's a good picture," will reinforce the idea that art work should be made to please others. Although we want to be positive in our response to any effort, and should be, creativity cannot flourish unless individuals learn to trust their own wishes and preferences. This may be a new experience for many persons with mental retardation.

An acknowledgement of the work makes the participants feel they have communicated successfully: **"I see you made three different kinds of flowers,"** or **"You really worked with that piece of clay a long time."** Noting specific strengths will be more meaningful and believable than blanket compliments (such as "That's pretty"): **"You used the whole page this time, Betty."**

Often, the best response is none. There may be no necessity to convey your interest and enthusiasm while the participant is deeply absorbed in the art-making process; let the individual work!

Summary

- THE TYPE OF VERBAL RESPONSE THE GROUP LEADER GIVES TO PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THEIR ART WORK MAY AFFECT THE WAY IN WHICH FUTURE ART IS MADE, EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY.
- ASK QUESTIONS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PICTURE OR SCULPTURE BEFORE MAKING COMMENTS.
- ACKNOWLEDGE THE PARTICULAR PROCESS WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL HAS UNDERTAKEN AND THE UNIQUENESS OF THE WORK, RATHER THAN GIVING NONSPECIFIC COMPLIMENTS.
- ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO DISCOVER THEIR OWN PREFERENCES AND OPINIONS.

MOTIVATION

Some individuals will take immediately to art materials and work steadily with little need for assistance. Others, however, may be reluctant to join the art group initially, for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include hesitation to try something new, fear of not succeeding at the task (particularly among those who have more mild intellectual impairments), or anxiousness about participating in a group activity. These persons will need special attention to help them engage in the activity. Participants may also need motivating when they are reluctant to start a new project, or to try new materials and techniques.

As discussed above in "Promoting Successful Art Experiences", a group leader who wishes to initiate or increase the participation of an individual will not be successful if that individual feels pushed. Participation must be voluntary and choices should be offered. A careful assessment of the individual's preferences and abilities, both cognitive and motor, will help insure that the activity does not aim too high or too low, and that it is interesting and meaningful.

Why is the individual reluctant? Try to discover the reason for resistance so that a plan can be developed. For example, a man who says, "That stuff's for kids," may really mean, "I'm afraid my work will look like a child's." An appropriate strategy might then include sharing examples of well known artists who work non-representationally (abstract art) and presenting the activities in an adult a manner as possible.

Work with what's already there. Any interest or ability can be related to art making with some imagination on the part of the group leader. For example, a woman who won't pick up a brush or pencil but likes scissors can be encouraged to cut out shapes. Later she is shown how those shapes

may be arranged on a background. (The paper cut-outs of French post-Impressionist artist Henri Matisse would be an appropriate resource to show her.) Eventually she may glue the shapes into a picture and add color using oil pastels, etc. The potential participant who is approached with positive acceptance and with an appreciation for his or her existing strengths and abilities will be more likely to overcome his or her hesitation.

The level of accomplishment is unimportant compared with the ability to take a step forward, even if it's a little step.

Look for small changes. The level of accomplishment is unimportant compared with the ability to take a step forward, even if it's a little step. A participant who has a habit of hurriedly making one painting and then leaving the group has made a notable advance when he follows up the first quick painting with a second one.

Know when to back off. Some withdrawn or anxious persons are uncomfortable when confronted with the enthusiastic urging of a staff member. These individuals are best approached indirectly. For example, the first goal could be participation by merely remaining in the art area but not seated at the group table. Many participants need initial encouragement or active assistance in getting ideas or appropriate materials. Once they have started working, continued "help" may become counter-productive.

Use the enthusiasm of the group. A group setting for an activity is a good motivator. Hang the art work of participants on the walls in the area where the activity takes place. Seat a resistant or underparticipating individual next to someone who is actively engaged throughout the session. Encourage the participants to show each other their work.

Motivate through stimulation. See suggestions for stimulating creativity in the previous section on "Promoting Successful Art Experiences".

Summary

- MAXIMIZE PARTICIPATION BY CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT PUSHED.
- IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS RELUCTANT BECAUSE OF UNFAMILIARITY WITH VISUAL ART MATERIALS, RELATE ART ACTIVITIES TO HIS OR HER CURRENT INTERESTS.
- USE ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE AN APPROPRIATE DEGREE OF CHALLENGE AND TO CAPITALIZE UPON EXISTING STRENGTHS.
- OTHER METHODS TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT INCLUDE PROVIDING STIMULATING SENSORY EXPERIENCES AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE ENERGY OF THE GROUP SETTING.

WORKING WITH DISABILITIES

Mental and physical challenges need not be obstacles to creative involvement. However, they do require some flexibility and ingenuity on the part of the group leader. Here are some specific approaches to maximizing the value of the art experience for persons with various disabilities.

Mental retardation may be accompanied by difficulties in focussing and maintaining attention on the art task, by impulsive use of materials, or by rigidly repetitive art making. For persons who quickly go from one sheet of paper to another, try "slower" media, for example, colored pencil instead of tempera paint. Use larger paper and encourage the participant to work on the entire page. Somewhat structured activities may be more appropriate for impulsive individuals than a completely free choice format. A ruler may be offered which can be used to draw a design. Alternately, abstract shapes cut out of cardboard can be arranged by the participant into a design and traced around. Areas of color can then be added to the picture.

When individuals become stuck in repetitive patterns, introduce new elements such as a different size, shape, or color of paper, or a different drawing material, etc. A new group activity may also inspire a varied response. Look for small, gradual changes.

When presenting an activity to an individual with memory impairment, discuss only one step at a time. Speak clearly in simple sentences, using repetition if necessary.

Memory impairment such as that accompanying Alzheimer's disease and other dementias requires sensitive support from the group leader. Noise and visual "clutter" are especially distracting to these individuals. Choices may need to be limited (although not eliminated) to prevent anxiety. When presenting an activity, discuss only one step at a time. Speak clearly in simple sentences, using repetition if necessary. Gestures, demonstrations, or pictures will aid in conveying the spoken message.

Many persons with dementia do not respond well to a blank sheet of paper, especially when new to the art experience. "Stimulus images" may be preferred by some participants (see Part Two: Activity Plans). Visual cues in the form of still-life objects, art reproductions, or photographs are sometimes helpful.

Participants with ***visual impairments*** will benefit from sensory stimulation. Expand the art experience with music, movement and with materials such as scented markers. Some drawing materials, including oil pastels, will leave a raised line which can be felt. Simple shapes cut from construction paper can be glued onto the page to provide tactile stimulation and some reassuring boundaries. Collages can be made using textured materials of just about any kind. (Use a sturdy base such as cardboard.) Perhaps the most meaningful art activity for those with visual impairments is clay sculpture or construction with three dimensional materials such as wood scraps, cardboard boxes and other "recycled" items.

For individuals with partial vision, reduce glare by avoiding shiny, reflective surfaces. Use light/dark contrasts: if white paper has been selected and the table is white, the working surface may be covered with the brown wrapping paper which comes in large rolls. In sculpture

activities, use gray clay together with red clay to create contrasting areas.

Difficulties with fine motor coordination and grip strength are not uncommon in elderly persons. Markers (nylon or felt tipped) do not require much strength to make an easily visible mark. Wide handled brushes and jumbo-sized oil pastels are some of the available materials which are easier to hold. Brushes and drawing materials can be made less difficult to grasp by wrapping them with foam rubber or foam hair curlers which are secured to the implement with rubber bands or strapping tape. Non-hardening modeling clay can be purchased in the least firm variety and may be further softened by warming it before use.

For persons with ***absent or limited use of the limbs***, adaptations may be necessary which allow the brush, drawing implement, or sculpting tool to be attached to the hand, foot, or head. Implements may also be adapted to be held in the mouth. Paper which is taped to the working surface will allow greater control. Secure paint containers in a weighted rack to avoid spillage. Excellent illustrations of these and other low-cost adaptations are included in the book *Freedom To Create* (Ludins-Katz & Katz, 1987). Commercial catalogs offer assistive products for persons with physical disabilities which may be purchased (see Appendix B: Additional Resources).

When working with someone who has limited muscular control, activities which don't require precision are most appropriate. For example, a person who has difficulty using a pencil or scissors may work well and independently painting on large-sized paper with a large bristled brush attached to his or her hand.

The following general guidelines may be helpful in working with persons who are mentally and physically challenged:

1. **Emphasize the non-representational aspects of art.** One often hears people in the general population say, "I can't even draw a straight line," as if manual dexterity were the most important attribute of an artist. This popular misconception can be overcome in the art group by stressing that the use of realistic, recognizable imagery is only one of the various approaches to art which are possible.
2. **Set realistic goals.** Achievement should be measured on an individual basis. For some, a small change is an enormous step forward.
3. **Work from available strengths.** No matter how impaired, everyone can participate in an art experience in some way. If the group leader works with the individual as a whole person (who happens to have a disability), the participant's limitations will not be the focus of attention. Instead,existing abilities will be enhanced and undiscovered potential realized.

Summary

- FOR PERSONS WHO WORK IMPULSIVELY, STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES AND MORE CONTROLLED MEDIA MAY BE HELPFUL.
- VARIATIONS ON AN ACTIVITY MAY STIMULATE A NEW RESPONSE FROM THOSE WHO ARE STUCK IN REPETITION.

- MEMORY LOSS NECESSITATES ELIMINATION OF DISTRACTIONS, SIMPLE COMMUNICATION STYLES AND THE USE OF VISUAL AIDS.
- OFFER SENSORY EXPERIENCES AND THREE DIMENSIONAL MATERIALS TO PERSONS WITH IMPAIRED SIGHT.
- MATERIALS CAN BE SELECTED AND ADAPTED FOR PERSONS WITH WEAK HANDS OR FOR THOSE UNABLE TO USE THEIR ARMS OR LEGS.
- NO MATTER HOW CHALLENGED, EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE IN AN ART EXPERIENCE IN SOME FASHION.

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HOW TO USE THE ACTIVITY PLANS

The following 15 activity plans have been used successfully with older adults who have developmental disabilities. They can introduce your art group participants to painting, drawing, clay sculpture, cardboard assemblage, collage, simple printing techniques, and other art experiences. There are many additional exciting materials and methods which cannot be included here. It is hoped that this guide may lead to further exploration and discoveries.

Read Part One first. These plans are designed to be used with the rest of this guide. The activity itself is only part of the formula for a successful art experience; the setting, group leadership, and other elements previously discussed are also key ingredients.

Flexibility of the plans. The activity plans can be approached flexibly, keeping in mind the needs of the group and its individual members. After some initial trials, you may wish to adapt the type of materials or other aspects of the activities in order to best serve your participants. Introducing variations upon the basic plans will keep everyone interested and creative. Some art experiences can take place over two or more sessions. For example, for *Cardboard Construction*, items can be assembled and attached on one day and painted on another.

The essential purpose of the plans is to stimulate creative self-expression. The form that expression takes is best determined by the individual.

Important note. A group "plan" should never take priority over individual creative impulses. If participants wish to pursue a direction which is different from that of the activity plan on a particular day, encourage them, if at all possible. For example, if the group is working from a still-life of flowers and one person begins to draw a portrait of her neighbor, her efforts should be supported.

Preparation. When undertaking an activity, allow plenty of time to read through the plan carefully, assemble the necessary materials and, if possible, try the art experience yourself. Experiencing the process which the participants will be undertaking will help you to anticipate problems which may arise, as well as to envision creative possibilities.

Materials. Most of the necessary art supplies will be found in Appendix A. Other materials can be salvaged from throwaway items commonly used in the kitchen or office. Many of the activities call for white drawing paper. The size of paper recommended is approximate. However, it is important that the paper be of good quality, at least a 60 lb. weight, and suitable for a variety of wet and dry media.

When to use the plans. All of the activities are designed to be used by persons with various levels of ability. **However, the plans are printed roughly in the order in which it would be appropriate to introduce them; those that can be used effectively by new groups are included in the beginning of Part Two, while those that are best used by more experienced groups are placed near the end.** For example, *Painting to Music* is a simple and enjoyable experience which might be appropriate for the first art session (with repetitions at other times), whereas joint activities such as *Mural with Cut-Out Images* or *Body Tracing* should be introduced after the participants have achieved some degree of familiarity with the creative art experiences and the other group members.

When not to use the plans. A creative art program should not rely exclusively on planned activities. Although the plans included here are designed to be as open-ended as possible, less structured experiences should be offered on a regular basis, at least for some participants. Such experiences entail providing a selection of materials to be chosen and used in whatever way the participants desire. The group leader is available for guidance and support. After some intial experience with the activity plans, many individuals will have little difficulty taking advantage of this kind of art session.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *EXPLORING CLAY*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
clay (self-hardening if kiln unavailable)
wire or string
rolling pins
plastic knives and forks
pencils
shallow dishes
aprons to protect clothing
hand lotion

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Slice off pieces of clay with wire or string and make a grapefruit-sized ball of clay for each participant. Make *slip*, a kind of clay glue, by mixing small amounts of clay and water to a muddy consistency in several shallow containers.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: For the group's initial experiences with clay, focus on exploring the feel and possibilities of the medium, rather than emphasizing making a sculpture. Show the group how the clay can be pounded, mashed and flattened, how it can be pulled, rolled into cylinders, or formed into balls. Pencils or plastic forks can poke holes in the clay. Plastic knives can slice or "carve" it. Slabs of clay can be made with the rolling pin.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: For those individuals who attempt to construct things by attaching pieces of clay together, the following technique will be helpful in preventing the constructions from falling apart as they dry: (1) *Score* the surface of both pieces to be attached together by scratching with a plastic fork. (2) Put some clay slip on the scored surfaces. (3) Press the surfaces together.

When the activity is finished and people have washed their hands, offer lotion which will counteract the drying effect of the clay.

Tempera Painting by Martin Valpatich

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ACTIVITY PLAN: *PAINTING TO MUSIC*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
tempera paint
assorted sizes of brushes
large sturdy paper (at least 18" x 24")
containers for paint & water for each person
aprons to protect clothing
cassette, record or compact disk player
recordings of music or natural sounds

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Prepare containers of paint with primary colors (blue, red, yellow), green, black and white for each person, including some empty tins for mixing additional colors. Listen to and select music or sounds which reflect varying moods and tempos, preferably without words.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: (Provide instructions before turning on the music.) Give the group a choice of which kind of music they want to start with: fast, slow, happy, sad, calm, etc. Show them how they can make their brushes move with the music. Demonstrate different kinds of brush strokes: long, short, dots, vertical, horizontal, curved, jagged, diagonal. Encourage large arm movements (you demonstrate) which cover as much of the page as possible.

As you play different selections, ask participants which colors the music makes them think of. You may want to offer new sheets of paper with each new piece of music, or encourage them to keep working on the same page if they need additional stimulation.

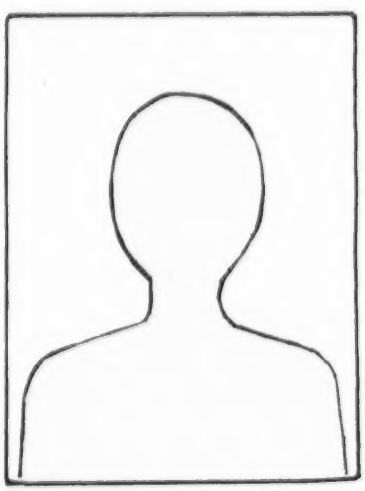
GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Emphasize that the paintings don't have to be of anything in particular, that the color, shapes and designs are what are important. Help participants to mix other colors such as purple, orange, brown, pink, etc.

ACTIVITY PLAN: ***STIMULUS IMAGE: HEAD AND SHOULDERS***

MATERIALS NEEDED: **construction paper**
11" x 14" white drawing paper
oil pastels
chalk pastels
optional: **magazines, hand-mirror**

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut out head-and-shoulders shapes (2 or more for each group member) from construction paper in colors related to flesh tones (light pink or yellow, off-white, salmon, brown, etc.). Glue securely to white background paper so that edges can't be lifted up.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Ask the participants to draw on the page to make a face, adding hair and clothing as they wish. First, give them some visual cues by pointing out the features of your own face or those of a member of the group who will not feel uncomfortable. You may also show them magazine photographs of faces which have different emotions, identifying expressions which are sad, surprised, happy, tired, etc. Have a hand-mirror available for those who want to look at their own faces.

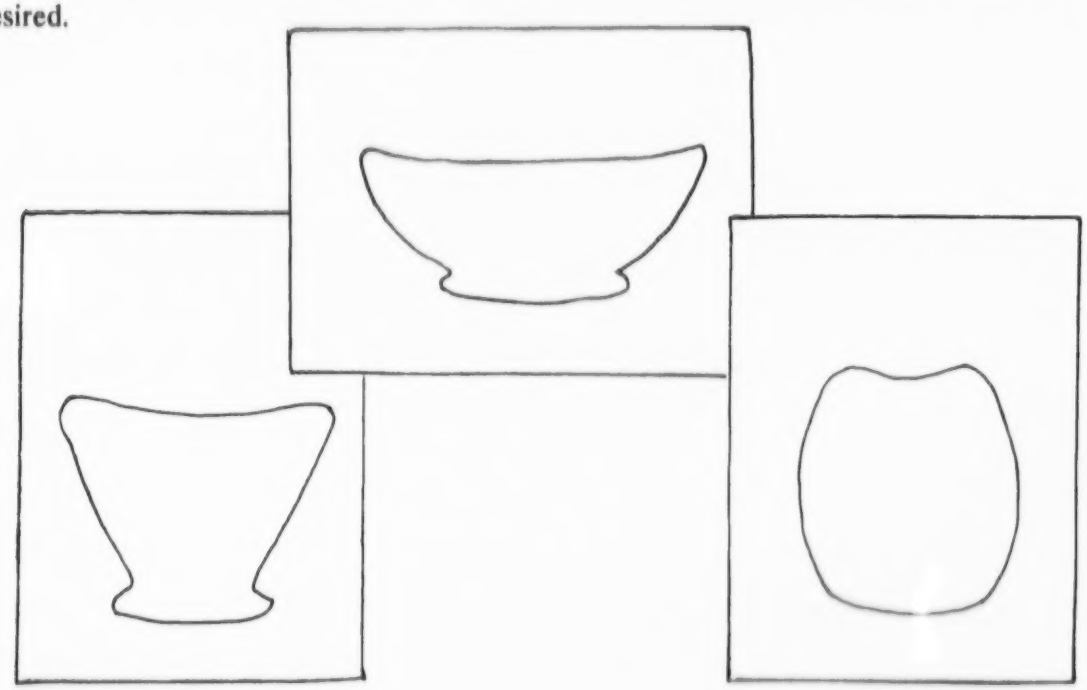


GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Encourage participants to use as much of the page as possible, feeling free to go over the edges of the glued-on shape. If individuals are unable to draw recognizable facial features, encourage any kind of marks they wish to make. If they do have the ability, but seem stuck, ask questions such as: What kind of shape will you make for the eyes? Where do you want to put the eyes? Will the person have hair? Will this person be wearing a hat?

ACTIVITY PLAN: ***STIMULUS IMAGE: VASE/CONTAINER***

MATERIALS NEEDED: **light-weight cardboard**
white drawing paper
oil pastels
chalk pastels
markers
water color boxes and brushes
optional: **fresh flowers or fruits and vegetables**

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Draw simple vase/container shapes on cardboard and cut them out. These will be used as patterns to trace around onto the white drawing paper. Before placing the patterns on the pages, turn some of the sheets horizontally and some vertically. When tracing, make sure the line is dark enough to be visible to the participants, and leave empty space on the page above and below the container image. Make enough for each individual to complete several pictures, if desired.



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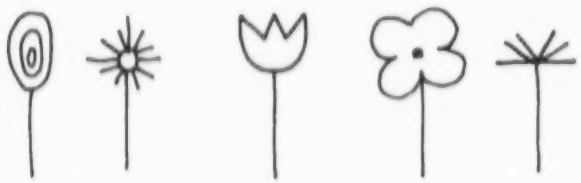
INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Tell the group that you are going to give them a picture of a container, and that they can draw or paint something to put into it. Give them a choice of the horizontal or vertical pages and different container shapes.

If fresh flowers are available, place a few containers with several blooms in them (a large bunch may be confusing) on the table where they can easily be seen. The real containers don't have to resemble the traced stimulus images.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: For those individuals who are able to make recognizable (representational) imagery, and who ask for help, show some different ways that flowers can be drawn. Use simple forms:

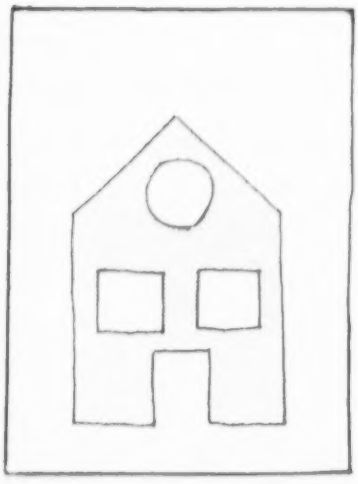


When demonstrating, draw on a sheet of scratch paper rather than drawing on the person's paper. Participants who are unable to make recognizable imagery can be encouraged to use the outline of the container shape as a design element in their pictures. Encourage the group to add color both inside and outside of the outline, so that the entire page is used.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *HOUSE CUT-OUTS*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
gray construction paper
white glue
11" x 14" (or larger) white drawing paper
pencils
colored pencils
oil pastels
water color boxes and brushes

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut out house shapes of construction paper, with openings for windows and door. Openings should be large enough to permit drawing inside. The white background paper should be large enough to allow space for drawing around the outside of the house.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Show the group how the house shape is to be glued onto the white background. Let the participants choose whether the paper will be turned vertically or horizontally, and where on the page the house will be placed. Participants may then select drawing materials and/or water color to complete the picture. Ask them what might be found inside and around the outside of a house. At the end of the session, encourage people to share their work and talk about it, if possible. Point out the different approaches they have used.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Encourage participants to draw or color on top of the gray paper as well as on the white. Suggest that they use as much of the page as possible. Ask questions to get them thinking about what they might put in the windows or around the outside: Is it day or night? Summer or winter?

ACTIVITY PLAN: *STAMP PAD PRINTING*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
paper towels
tempera paint
plate or pie tin
colored construction paper
assorted items to stamp with: wood scraps, corks, jar lids, spools, plastic forks, drinking straws, eraser end of pencils
aprons to protect clothing

Note about materials: Use your imagination to find other things from the kitchen or office which will print. They should be easy to grasp and make a well-defined mark, as well as be washable or disposable.

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Make a homemade stamp pad with paper towels: Put 3 paper towels on top of one another, fold them in half and then in half again. You should have a square made of 12 thicknesses of towels. Place on a plate or in a pie tin. Soak with about as much water as the towels will absorb, no more. Place about a tablespoon of tempera paint on the wet pad and spread evenly over the surface. Prepare enough stamp pads so that there is one within reach of each participant and there are several different colors available.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Introduce the activity by pointing out that the objects we use every day can be used to make pictures in a process called printing. Familiar objects make surprising marks when covered with paint and pressed onto paper. Demonstrate pressing the object onto the stamp pad and then onto the page. Show how each object makes a different shape.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Point out that shapes can be repeated to make a rhythmic pattern, or different shapes can be combined together. One color can be printed on top of another color. Encourage using as much of the page as possible. Make sure each participant has a chance to use several colors of paint and a variety of objects.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *PAPER AND FABRIC COLLAGE*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
poster board
assorted papers: brown paper (from mural roll or grocery bags), construction paper, wrapping paper in solid colors or abstract designs, newspaper
fabrics
white glue in cups with brushes for each person
shallow box tops or trays

Note about materials: Any kind of paper can be used, as long as there is a good choice of colors and textures. Papers should not be so thin that they will be difficult for the older individual to grasp between the fingers (for example, pieces of tissue paper are hard to pick up). Fabrics which have tactile qualities, such as corduroy or velveteen, are desirable, as are shiny papers, such as metallic gift wrap.

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut poster board into a few 9" x 12" pieces for each group member. Cut or tear papers into abstract shapes in a variety of sizes. Place them in several trays to be placed within participants' reach.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Explain to the group that they will be making a collage, which is a picture made by putting together pieces of paper into a design. Demonstrate the process of putting glue on one side of a shape and placing it onto the cardboard background. Show how the pieces can be touching or overlapping, as well as separate. Encourage participants to cover the entire surface with paper and fabric pieces.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: As this is an abstract project, talk about the kinds of shapes, colors and textures which they have chosen, as well as the way in which the pieces have been arranged (the composition). Those who are hesitant to participate might respond to a request to help cut or tear additional collage pieces.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *SPONGE PRINTING*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
thin kitchen sponges (synthetic)
tempera paint
paper towels
plates or pie tins
colored construction paper
aprons to protect clothing
***optional*: oil pastels or chalk pastels**

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut sponges into smaller pieces, in abstract shapes (circle, square, oval, triangle, etc.). Sponges should be dry or have excess water squeezed out. Prepare a homemade "stamp pad" with layers of paper towels (see *Stamp Pad Printing*). Have at least one stamp pad for each participant and a variety of colors, including white.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Demonstrate pressing the sponge onto the stamp pad and then onto the colored paper. Show how shapes can be placed with space in between, by putting shapes close together, or by overlapping them.

Offer a choice of paper colors, if available, and a choice of sponge shapes and sizes. Explain that the stamp pads will be passed around the table so that everyone has a chance to use all the colors.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Point out examples of both variety and repetition in the use of shapes. Both elements are important for an interesting picture. Provide wet paper towels for those who wish to wash paint off their hands.

Optional: Those who have some empty space in their finished prints may be encouraged to fill in some color around the sponge imprints with oil or chalk pastel. Demonstrate this with a print you have made on another sheet of paper.

ACTIVITY PLAN: ***FISH COLLAGE***

MATERIALS NEEDED:
construction paper in neutral colors (gray, buff, etc.)
collage materials: colored papers, metallic wrapping paper, tinted cellophane, aluminum, foil, sequins, pieces of egg shell, etc.
white glue in cups with brushes
white paper for background
blue and green construction paper
colored photographs of fish (if available)

Note about materials: Collage materials should include shiny items, to suggest the shininess of fish, and also textured materials which suggest the look and feel of fish scales (such as sequins or egg shells).

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut out a few different fish shapes from the construction paper. They should be large, but not bigger than the white background paper. Make sure the collage materials are in small enough sheets that participants can use them to cut or tear their own pieces.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Show photos of fish and point out the parts of the fish, such as eyes, fins, tail, teeth, etc. Talk about the variety of colors, especially in tropical fish, and the various designs on their bodies, such as spots or stripes.

Give individuals a choice of which fish shape they would like to work with. Provide collage materials and glue, demonstrating how to cut or tear pieces, how to place them on the fish shape and attach with glue. When the fish shapes are covered, provide white sheets for them to be glued onto as a background. Green and blue construction paper can then be torn into pieces for gluing around the fish to make "water."

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Encourage participants to cover all the fish with collage materials, and to cover as much as possible of the white background with the blue and green paper. Provide assistance in making an eye, if appropriate.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *CARDBOARD CONSTRUCTION*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
small cardboard boxes and containers:
cereal, cornmeal or oatmeal boxes;
paper trays for fruit, egg cartons, etc.
paper towel and toilet paper rolls
paper plates and cups
masking tape
white glue
stapler
tempera paint and brushes
optional: **assorted small items (see below)**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Explain that the group will be making constructions/sculptures out of cardboard boxes by gluing or taping together several objects to make something new. The constructions may then be painted when they are finished. Show participants the different kinds of materials available. Demonstrate by putting a few objects together to show various possibilities. Emphasize that the construction doesn't have to be anything in particular; they are making a design in space. Others may have a specific idea, such as an animal, robot, etc., which they would like to make.

Ask each participant to select 3 objects they would like to put together. When these are attached, they may choose more if they wish. When constructions are finished, put out tempera paint and brushes.

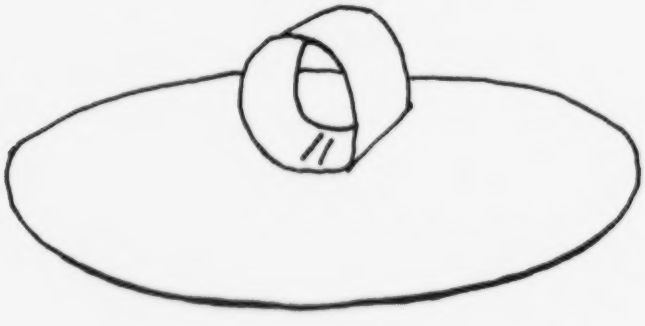
Optional: Constructions may have details, decorations or texture added by gluing on smaller items such as toothpicks, string, styrofoam "peanuts", drinking straws, etc. This can be done before or after painting.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Participants may need assistance in planning how to attach the cardboard items together. If glue is used, it may be necessary to add tape or string to secure the objects together until the glue dries. Some things can be joined, with your help, by cutting slits or holes into the cardboard.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *STENCIL PAINTING*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
soft plastic lids (from margarine tubs or coffee cans)
stapler
water color or tempera paint and brushes
white drawing paper
paper towels
aprons to protect clothing

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut out abstract shapes from plastic lids. These will be the stencils. Make a handle for each stencil by cutting strips about 3/4 of an inch wide and 3 inches long from the same plastic. Staple the strip into a loop on one side of the stencil.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Demonstrate placing a stencil onto the page and using a brush to paint around the outside of the shape. When the stencil is lifted off, a painted outline of a shape will remain on the paper. Show how additional shapes can be placed on top of or next to the first image.

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Point out that it is not important if participants paint on top of the plastic, or that the outside edges of the shape are neat. Irregular edges will make a more interesting, unique picture. Provide a selection of different shapes for participants to choose from and give each person a paper towel.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: If participants are having trouble holding the stencil against the paper without moving it, use a loop of masking tape underneath the plastic to secure it to the page. They can then peel off the stencil and tape and move it to the next place on the page. The top of the plastic can be wiped with a paper towel if a new color is being used.

When participants have covered the entire page with shapes, demonstrate (with your original sheet) how the outlines of shapes can be filled in with different colors, and spaces between shapes can also be painted. Encourage individuals to make as much of the white disappear as possible.

ACTIVITY PLAN: *MURAL WITH CUT-OUT IMAGES*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
simple outline drawings of animals, fish, or other images
light weight cardboard
white drawing paper
chalk and oil pastels
pencils
scissors
glue in paper cups with brushes
mural paper in approx. 5 foot length
wide masking tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut out drawings and trace onto to cardboard to make patterns. Cut out the patterns. These can then be traced around onto white drawing paper for use by participants. (Trace some ahead of time for participants who are unable to do it themselves.) Tape mural paper to an adjacent wall space.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Explain the concept of the mural: Everyone works individually at the table; the pictures are then cut out and pasted on the mural paper all together. Offer a choice of several different kinds of animals or fish, etc., and a choice of chalk or oil pastels. Have pencils within reach.

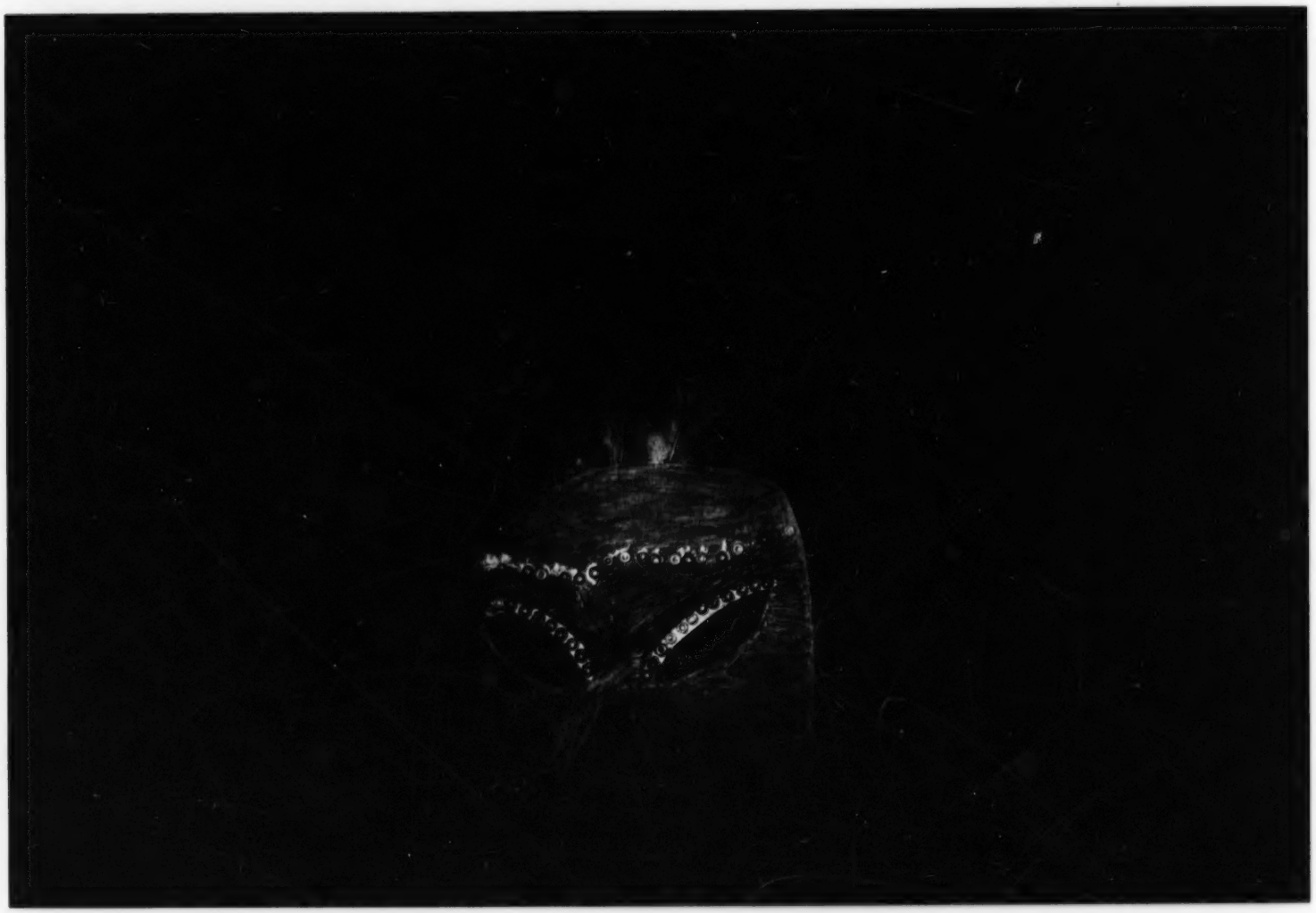
Ask the participants to add colors, lines and details to the traced images. Explain that anything they make outside of the lines may not be able to be included when it is cut out, but don't discourage those who are unable to stay inside the lines.

When the participants have completed several images, provide scissors to cut them out. Ask the group to decide where the animals/fish, etc. will be (zoo, jungle, ocean, aquarium?). Have them take turns gluing their work onto the mural, choosing where the images will be placed.

Ask the participants to add line and color to complete the background of the mural (which does not have to be realistic).

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Assist with cutting out images if participant is physically unable or is dissatisfied with his/her own efforts. Precise cutting is not necessary.

Note: The group could choose the theme for the murals in a previous session.



Masks by Eileen Dovey, James Bungard and Martin Valpatich

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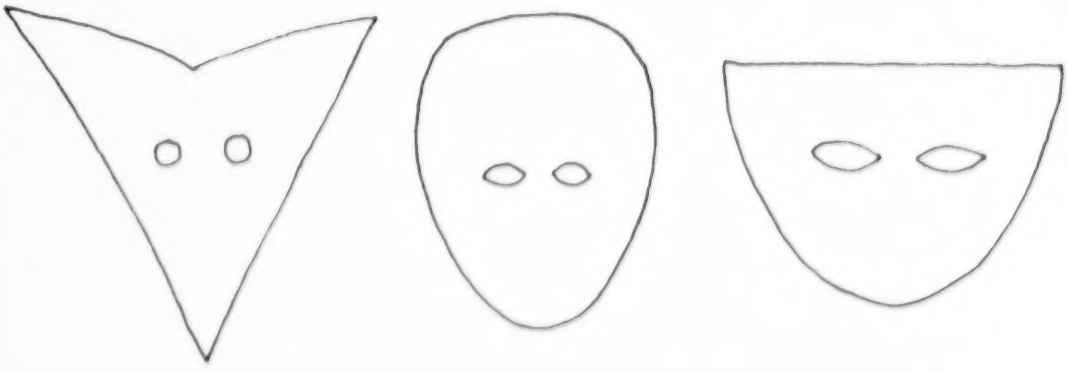
ACTIVITY PLAN: *MASKS*

MATERIALS NEEDED:
lightweight cardboard in various colors
hole puncher
string
oil pastels and/or tempera paint and brushes
white glue
decorative items such as feathers, yarn, beads
photos of African or Native American masks
mirror

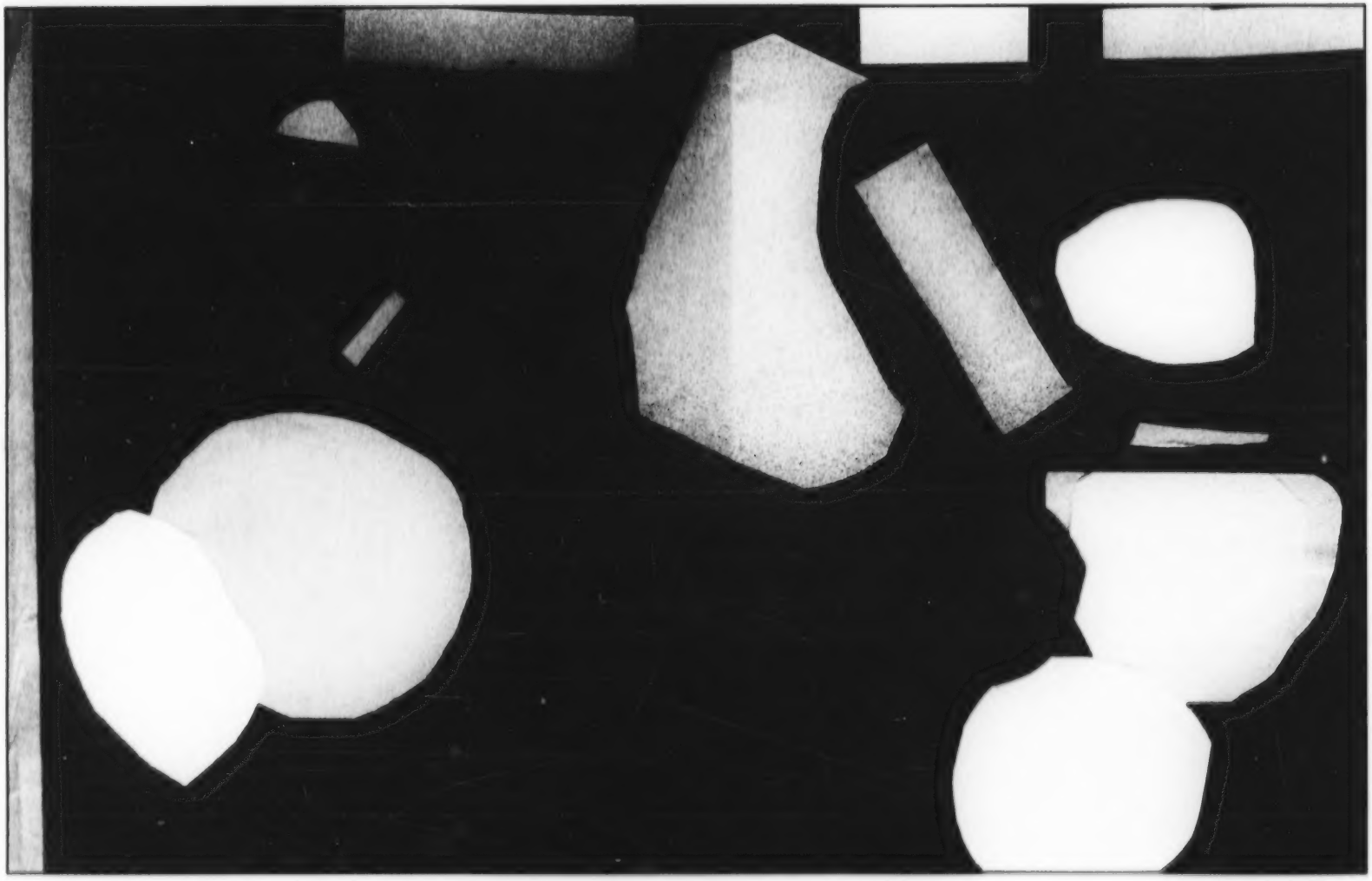
PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Cut out basic mask shapes from cardboard with openings for eyes. Put glue in individual cups with brushes.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Show examples of masks (from library books or magazines). If you would like, you may show one which you have made ahead of time out of the same materials which the group will be using. Point out and ask participants about the different emotions shown. Tell them they can make a happy mask, a sad mask, an angry mask, etc.

Give participants a choice of mask shapes and colors of cardboard (neutral colors are best because the oil pastel will stand out.) Encourage **those who are capable** to depict facial features. Others may work abstractly. Provide some decorative items such as feathers, yarn or beads, to be glued on after the drawing or painting materials have been used.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Offer assistance in cutting an opening for a mouth, if desired. Assist participants in punching holes in the sides of the masks and tying strings to each side so that the mask may be worn, **if they wish**. Offer the opportunity to look at the masks in the mirror.



Group Collage

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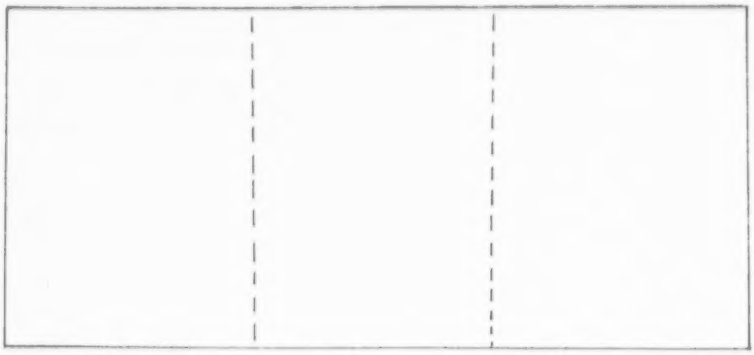
ACTIVITY PLAN: *GROUP COLLAGE*

MATERIALS NEEDED: **assorted colors of construction paper in any size**
3 sheets of 22" x 30" black poster board
wide masking tape
scissors
white glue in cups with brushes

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: Join the 3 sheets of poster board together along the longest edges, using tape on the back. You will have a 66" x 30" background surface. Tape the background to the wall at a height which is easily reachable. If the construction paper is large, cut sheets in half.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: Tell the group that they will be making a collage together. Remind them of what a collage is: "A collage is a design made by gluing pieces of paper onto the page." Show individual collage work they've done previously, if applicable.

Ask participants to take scissors and 2 or 3 different sheets of construction paper in the colors they desire. (Do not make glue available yet.) Ask them to use their scissors to cut, or to tear, the paper into any shapes they would like. Remind them that the shapes don't have to be anything in particular.

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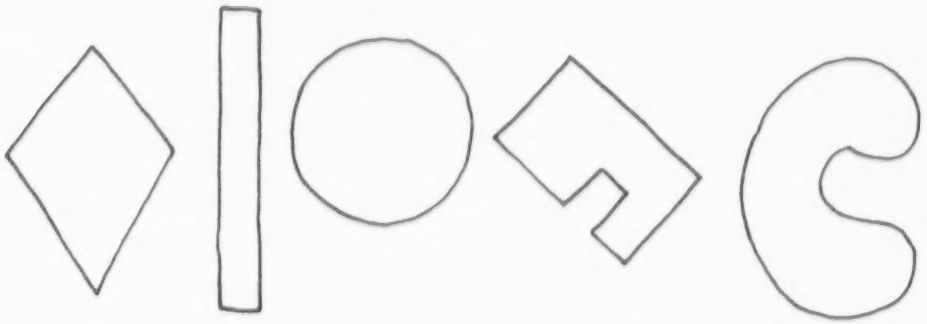
On a large, visible surface, demonstrate by drawing geometric and irregular shapes:



Each person should have cut out at least 5 shapes, if possible. If everyone is cutting out small pieces, encourage some participants to make large pieces, or vice versa, so that there is a variety of sizes, shapes and colors.

When everyone is finished cutting or tearing, ask participants to take turns applying glue to 1 or 2 shapes at a time, standing and attaching the pieces where they wish on the background surface that has been taped to the wall. This process can be continued until all the pieces are used.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Point out that it looks interesting when pieces touch or overlap each other, but be alert for the bad feelings which may occur if one person's shape covers another's. Encourage participants to ask permission if they wish to overlap another's shape. Help those who have difficulty being assertive to speak for themselves. As the collage is nearly finished, ask the group to decide what areas, if any, need to have more pieces added.

ACTIVITY PLAN: ***BODY TRACING***

MATERIALS NEEDED: **mural paper in 6 foot length**
wide masking tape
black marker
chalk pastels
optional: **spray fixative**

Note: This activity works best with no more than 3 or 4 persons.

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY: At the beginning of the art session, ask a willing staff member to help by having you trace around him or her with a marker onto the mural paper. He or she can be lying down or standing against the paper which has been taped to the wall. A very broad outline is more helpful than one with details of clothing and hairstyle. The group can help decide what pose the person will be in: with arms at sides or hands on hips or holding something, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: With the outline drawing taped to a flat wall surface, ask the group to decide if they would like the person to be a man or woman. What will the person wear? Will the person be carrying an object such as a bag or umbrella? What kind of hairstyle will it be?

Ask for volunteers to start working on a particular area of the figure. Those who are able to work representationally may be asked to do the facial features and outline the items of clothing. Others can fill in the colors of the clothing and skin.

After the figure is completed, ask the group where the person might be (inside? outside?), and encourage them to draw a background. The background can be quite simple: solid colors, grass and sky, patterned wallpaper, etc.

GROUP LEADER INTERVENTION: Some drawing by the group leader may be necessary if participants are unable to start themselves. In this case, be sure to ask questions as to what is wanted and limit your contribution to the minimum necessary for getting the group members working.

Make sure everyone has a turn, and keep as many people actively participating at one time as possible. Those who are not working can help make decisions as to what areas need attention, if anything needs changing, or what colors should be used next.

The finished work may be sprayed with a fixative to help keep the pastel from smearing.

APPENDIX A

Art Materials List

Drawing Materials

Pencils (varying degrees of hardness)
Colored pencils
Pencil sharpeners
Gum erasers
Kneaded erasers (for pastels)
Oil pastels
Chalk pastels (firm rather than soft)
Spray fixative for pastels
Felt-tipped markers (nontoxic, fine-tipped and wide-tipped)

Painting Materials

Watercolors (in cake form)
Watercolor brushes (camel hair or sable)
Tempera paint (premixed, in large squeeze bottles)
Brushes for tempera (bristle or nylon, good quality and varied sizes, some with fat handles)
Muffin tins or other containers for tempera
Empty coffee cans for water
Aprons to protect clothing
Plastic sheeting to protect tables and/or floors
Paper towels

Paper

White drawing paper, 12" x 18" & 18" x 24" (good quality, all-purpose, for painting and drawing materials)
Mural paper (in roll)
Colored construction paper
Poster board

3-dimensional materials

Clay (self-hardening if kiln not available)
Clay tools (can be improvised from eating utensils, tongue depressors, etc.)
Wire or string
Rolling pins

Assorted paper boxes, cartons, trays, plates, cups, and cardboard rolls
Wood scraps for construction

Other

Scissors
White glue (nontoxic)
Disposable cups for glue
Masking tape
Stapler
Rulers
Hole puncher
Sponges
Pie tins
Plastic lids from margarine tubs or coffee cans
Collage materials (papers, fabric, magazine pictures, etc.)
Feathers, yarn or beads
Books, postcards & other reproductions for pictorial resources
Musical recordings
Mirror

APPENDIX B

Additional Resources

Some Mail Order Sources

NASCO ARTS AND CRAFTS
901 Janesville Avenue
P.O. Box 901
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538-0901
1-800-558-9595

PYRAMID ART SUPPLIES
P.O. Box 8104
Mansfield, OH 44901-8104
1-800-637-0955

FRED SAMMONS, INC.
(Rehabilitation and ADL products)
P.O. Box 32
Brookfield, IL 60513-0032
1-800-323-5547

Resource Organizations

AMERICAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION
1202 Allanson Road
Mundelein, IL 60060
(708)949-6064

The A.A.T.A. is a professional membership organization which can provide names of possible consultants. Regional chapters of the A.A.T.A. may also be of assistance. Contact the national office for information about the chapter nearest you.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ART & DISABILITIES
551 23rd Street
Richmond, CA 94804
(415) 620-0290

N.I.A.D. offers publications, videotapes, and training in the area of visual art and disabilities.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS
John F. Kennedy Center
Washington, D.C. 20566
(202)662-8899

Local Very Special Arts organizations can be identified by contacting the national office.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
Special Constituencies
Room 605
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506
(202)682-5532

The N.E.A. can supply the address and phone number of your state arts agency. State arts agencies often fund visiting artist programs and may have a directory of individuals available on a consultant basis. The state agency can refer you to the nearest local arts agency as well.

Publications

Livingston-Dunn, C. (1982). *Functional art therapy for the severely handicapped*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois Press.

Ludins-Katz, F., & Katz, E. (1990). *Art and disabilities: Establishing the creative art center for people with disabilities*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Ludins-Katz, F., & Katz, E. (1987). *Freedom to create*. Richmond, CA: National Institute of Art and Disabilities (to obtain this publication, see address under **Resource Organizations** above.)

Weiss, J. (1984). *Expressive therapy with elders and the disabled: Touching the heart of life*. New York: Haworth Press.

Williams, G., & Wood, M. (1977). *Developmental art therapy*. Baltimore: University Park Press.